

Message Text

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ACTION DOTE-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 /020 W
-----121450Z 055562 /47

R 121249Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2725

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 14004

FOR DOT: J. HERZ

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: PGOV, ETRN
SUBJ: TRANSPORT MINISTRY ORGANIZATION

REF: STATE 104263

1. IN FRANCE, CABINET-LEVEL RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION MATTERS IS VESTED IN JEAN-PIERRE FOURCADE MINISTER OF EQUIPMENT. HOWEVER, SINCE FOURCADE'S RESPONSIBILITIES ARE FAIRLY BROAD, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER MUCH OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION IS DELEGATED TO MARCEL CAVAILLE, STATE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, WHO REPORTS TO FOURCADE. BEFORE RAYMOND BARRE BECAME PRIME MINISTER LAST YEAR CAVAILLE, STILL WITH THE STATE SECRETARY TITLE, WAS TOP MAN IN THE TRANSPORTATION FIELD AND REPORTED DIRECTLY TO THE PRIME MINISTER. CAVAILLE HAS TAKEN SPECIAL INTEREST IN ECMT AFFAIRS, HAVING CHAIRED THAT BODY DURING THE PAST YEAR.

2. PRINCIPAL FRENCH TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS MAY BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

(A) CIVIL AVIATION--THERE ARE OF COURSE THE CONCORDE AND AIRBUS PROGRAMS AND CURRENT EFFORTS TO
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DEVELOP, POSSIBLY AS A JOINT VENTURE WITH US INDUSTRY, A NEW MEDIUM-RANGE JET TRANSPORT. IN ADDITION TO CAVAILLE, KEY PLAYERS ARE CLAUDE ABRAHAM, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION, AND GERARD GUIBE, DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AERONAUTICAL PROGRAMS ON ABRAHAM'S STAFF. THE DEFENSE MINISTRY ALSO HAS A KEY SAY IN FRENCH INDUSTRIAL POLICY

AFFECTING AERONAUTICAL PROGRAMS SINCE THIS MINISTRY HAS TRUSTEESHIP RESPONSIBILITY OVER THE FRENCH AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY, CIVIL AS WELL AS MILITARY.

(B) SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

(1) RAILWAYS--IN ADDITION TO UPGRADING ROLLING STOCK BY INTRODUCTION OF NEWER, MORE COMFORTABLE PASSENGER TRAINS ON MAIN LINES AND ALSO IMPROVING SERVICE BETWEEN PROVINCIAL POINTS OUTSIDE PARIS, THE MAJOR PROGRAM TO BE UNDERTAKEN IS CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW HIGH-SPEED RAIL LINK BETWEEN PARIS AND LYON. TRACTION POWER WILL BE DRAWN FROM OVERHEAD LINES, BY-PASSING THE HIGH-SPEED TURBOTRAIN TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED BY THE SNCF AND DEMONSTRATED ON THE TEST TRACK OUTSIDE BORDEAUX.

(2) SUBWAY AND LIGHT RAIL--A NUMBER OF SUBWAY PROJECTS ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN FRENCH PROVINCIAL CITIES, BOTH CLASSIC UNDERGROUND PROJECTS AND AUTOMATED, LIGHT RAIL AS WITH THE VAL PROJECT AT LILLE. THE GOF IS ALSO ENCOURAGING RENEWED INTEREST IN LIGHT RAIL TECHNOLOGY. IN PARIS THE METRO SYSTEM CONTINUES CONSTRUCTION OF NEWLINES, INCLUDING INTERCHANGE BETWEEN SUBWAY AND RAILWAY LINES, AND CONTINUES TO MODERNIZE ROLLING STOCK.

(3) PRT--THE ARAMIS PRT PROTOTYPE DEVELOPED BY THE FRENCH COMPANY MATRA HAS FOUND NO TAKERS AND PRT DEVELOPMENT IN FRANCE APPEARS TO BE SOMNOLENT.
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ONE HEARS NO MORE OF THE BERTIN CO.'S ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR PRT SYSTEMS. A PRT SYSTEM WHICH THE CITY OF NANCY PROPOSED TO INSTALL WAS ABANDONED AS BOTH EXPENSIVE AND UNREALISTIC.

(4) AEROTRAIN--THIS TECHNOLOGY, DEVELOPED BY THE BERTIN CO., IS BEING USED ONLY IN ITS MARITIME APPLICATIONS. THE ORLEANS TEST TRACK FOR THE AEROTRAIN LAND VEHICLE IS AGAIN SHUT DOWN AND NO PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF THIS TECHNOLOGY ARE CURRENTLY ON THE HORIZON.

(5) HIGHWAYS--CONSTRUCTION OF FREEWAYS AND TOLL ROADS LINKING THE MAJOR CITIES OF FRANCE CONTINUES, THOUGH AT A SOMEWHAT REDUCED RATE.

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(6) KEY PLAYERS--CLAUDE COLLET, DIRECTOR OF
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION, MINISTRY OF EQUIPMENT, AND
HIS DEPUTY, DOBIAS.

3. RESEARCH-- COORDINATION OF RESEARCH, AS
DISTINCT FROM BASIC OR APPLIED RESEARCH CARRIED OUT BY
INDUSTRY (OFTEN WITH GOF FUNDING), AS WELL AS CONDUCT
OF STUDIES OCCUPIES THE TRANSPORT RESEARCH INSTITUTE
(IRT), A BODY WHICH COMES UNDER THE MINISTRY OF
EQUIPMENT. IRT IS THE INSTRUMENT FOR MOST OF THE
COORDINATION BETWEEN DOT AND THE GOF UNDER THE
AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS FOR EXCHANGE OF
RESEARCH INFO IN CERTAIN SPECIFIC AREAS. KEY CONTACT
HERE IS MICHEL FRYBOURG, DIRECTOR OF IRT.

4. UNLIKE THE SITUATION IN THE US, ROAD SAFETY DOES
NOT FALL WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE GOF'S
TRANSPORTATION ESTABLISHMENT. THE FRENCH ROAD SAFETY
PROGRAM IS HEADED BY A "DELEGATE FOR ROAD SAFETY" WHO
IS ATTACHED DIRECTLY TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S
OFFICE AND REPORTS TO HIM. THE DELEGATE IS
CHRISTIAN GERONDEAU (WHO IS ALSO DIRECTOR OF
CIVIL PROTECTION IN THE INTERIOR MINISTRY).

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